

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1.-37. (canceled).

38. (currently amended): A gene amplification primer, wherein said primer comprises a region of which contains a strand or a complementary strand thereof containing at least 15 or more continuous nucleotides of either SEQ ID NO:3, or the complement thereof, wherein said region comprises at least two positions wherein a nucleotide unique to *Vibrio vulnificus* is present compared to other bacteria of the genus *Vibrio*, and wherein said at least two positions are selected from the group consisting of where two or more nucleotides are nucleotides at any of positions 9, 81, 138, 153, 172, 180, 208, 228, 237, 288, and 540 of SEQ ID NO: 3, said positions being unique to the *Vibrio vulnificus* bacterial group, and wherein said primer is also not more than 40 nucleotides in length.

39. (currently amended): The gene amplification primer of claim 38, wherein a ~~region that~~ said primer contains a region wherein at least two positions within 21 continuous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:3 or the complement thereof are, at a high frequency, a position(s) unique to *Vibrio vulnificus* as compared to other bacteria of the genus *Vibrio*, and wherein said at least two positions are selected from the group consisting of: positions 138 and 153 of SEQ ID

NO: 3; positions 172 and 180 of SEQ ID NO: 3 and; positions 208, 228, and 237 of SEQ ID NO: 3 as specified in claim 38 is used.

40. (currently amended): The gene amplification primer of claim 39, wherein said at least two positions are which contains a strand or a complementary strand thereof containing nucleotides at positions 138 and 153 of SEQ ID NO: 3 in the sequence listing.

41. (withdrawn - currently amended): The gene amplification primer of claim 39, wherein said at least two positions are which contains a strand or a complementary strand thereof containing nucleotides at positions 172 and 180 of SEQ ID NO: 3 in the sequence listing.

42. (withdrawn - currently amended): The gene amplification primer of claim 39, wherein said at least two positions are which contains a strand or a complementary strand thereof containing 2 or more nucleotides at any of positions 208, 228, and 237 of SEQ ID NO: 3 in the sequence listing.

43. (currently amended): The gene amplification primer of claim 39, wherein one of said at least two positions is the 3' terminal nucleotide is a nucleotide at a position that is unique to *Vibrio vulnificus* as specified in claim 39 of said primer.

44. (currently amended): The gene amplification primer of claim 38, which wherein said primer contains SEQ ID NO.:17, or the complement thereof or a complementary strand corresponding thereto.

45. (withdrawn - currently amended): The gene amplification primer of claim 38, ~~which wherein said primer contains SEQ ID NO.:18, or a complementary strand corresponding thereto~~the complement thereof.

46. (withdrawn - currently amended): The gene amplification primer of claim 38, ~~which wherein said primer contains SEQ ID NO.:19, or a complementary strand corresponding thereto~~the complement thereof.

47. (withdrawn - currently amended): The gene amplification primer of claim 38, ~~which wherein said primer contains SEQ ID NO.:20, or a complementary strand corresponding thereto~~the complement thereof.

48. (canceled).

49. (withdrawn - currently amended): A method for detecting, quantifying, or identifying *Vibrio vulnificus*, wherein the primer of ~~any one of~~ claim 38 is used.

50. (currently amended): A kit for detecting, quantifying, or identifying *Vibrio vulnificus*, wherein the primer of any one of claims ~~2 to 14, 17 to 35, and 38 to 40, 43 and 44~~47 is used.